



## Goalball

### What is Goalball?

Goalball is a Paralympic sport played by athletes who are blind and visually impaired. Developed after WWII as a way to keep blinded veterans physically active, it has become the premiere team game for blind athletes. Played competitively by men and women around the world, it is a very fast paced, physically challenging, strategic and exciting game.

### How Do You Play?

In goalball, two teams of three players each face each other across a court that is nine meters wide and 18 meters long. The object of the game is to roll a basketball size ball with bells inside over the opponent's goal line. Your opponents listen for the oncoming ball and attempt to block it with their bodies. Once they are able to stop the ball and take control of it, they become the offensive team. Complete rules are available at <http://www.ibsa.es>.

#### The Court and Rules

The player's zone is marked at either end of the court by taping a heavy string down to the court for the players to feel with their hands or feet. The player's zone is 3 meters deep and extends the width of the court. Each player's zone has three orientation lines which the players use to line themselves up with and maintain their orientation to the court. Three meters in front of the player's zone, is the overthrow line. The goalball must touch the floor at least once before crossing this line or a penalty is assessed. Other common penalties are for holding the ball too long, one player throwing too much and touching the eyeshade. When a penalty occurs, the guilty player must defend the entire court by himself. The game consists of two 12-minute halves and takes about an hour to play an entire game.

#### Strategy

The defensive team usually sets up a zone defensive. The player in the middle of the court is called the center. The center is the primary defensive player. He or she plays at the front of the player's zone and defends a majority of the court. The players to the right and left of the center are called wings. The wings are usually the primary offensive or throwing players. Defensively they play behind and to the left and right of the center defending their respective areas. During the game, the center will usually stop the ball and pass it to a wing. While the wing is throwing the ball, the center will reorient themselves to the center of the court. Knowing that a thrower is slow to return to his defensive position, or that a player might not

be in his defensive position, many teams will attempt a "quick throw" hoping to catch their opponent out of position. Curve balls, off speed balls and various other balls are sometimes thrown hoping to confuse the other team. Players may quietly change wing positions with the ball hoping to surprise the defending team by throwing from a different area.

## **Goalball Equipment**

### **GOALBALLS**

Click here to order goalballs. Price per goalball is \$100 for Current USABA Members and \$125 for non-members, This price includes shipping, handling and customs fees.

### **EYESHADES**

Goggles have to block all light and vision. Commercial goalball goggles are available. However ski goggles are often a lower cost and preferred alternative. It is suggested that you contact your local snow ski clubs or ski facilities and ask them to donate their used or lost and found goggles, scratched or cracked lens are no problem as you will be taping them anyway. The straps and the foam around the edge must be good. Although any type of tape can be used, you need to ensure no light can be seen through the lens and vent areas when the goggle is placed against the face.

### **KNEE AND ELBOW PADS**

Most any pad will work; however most of the Team USA players prefer to use the Trace brand as they seems to hold up longer. There are two kinds of Trace elbow pads: short ones and the longer variety. Although either type will work, most players prefer the longer pads. For the knee pads, most players prefer the Trace 47000 softball knee pad as it is longer and covers part of the shin. These can be bought at your local sport store. Pants  
There is no required pant. Most players prefer to use hockey pants while others prefer to use football pants and pads or soccer goalie pads combined with a variety of other pants. The use of all of these is permitted; however all members of the team must have the same color and style. These can be purchased at local sports stores.

### **RULES**

Complete goalball rules can be found at <http://www.ibsa.es> and click on goalball.

### **JERSEYS**

Jerseys may be hockey, football, soccer, or any other jersey so long as they match and have numbers that are a minimum of 20 centimeters (8 inches) high permanently affixed to both front and back. It is helpful to the officials and scorer's table if the numbers are contrasting colors and easy to read.

## FLOOR TAPE AND STRING

Two-inch wide gym floor tape is the best to use and may be purchased at most local sports stores. String (.003 meters in diameter) may be purchased at the local hardware.

It is suggest that you not use duct tape on the floor as most of the time it will damage the floor; masking tape is also not advised as it tears easily and is hard to remove.

## EYE PATCHES

Patches are required in all major competitions. At most tournaments in the USA patching is done on the basis of the opposing coach asking for certain players to be patch and then the requesting coach must furnish the patches. Additional information regarding eye patches can be found in the IBSA Goalball Rulebook.

## GOALS

Once your team becomes competitive you may wish to secure goals for them to practice with. Goals can also be purchased from a few commercial sources, but because these goals are specialized for this sport and the demand is small, they can be cost prohibitive. Several teams have produced low-cost goals using PVC. The dimensions of the goals can be found in the goalball rules at <http://www.ibsa.es>.